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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [HK](#) [SN](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE MEDIA CELEBRATE CORRESPONDENT'S RELEASE

REF: GUANGZHOU 72

Classified By: EP Chief Ike Reed. Reasons 1.4(b)(d).

11. (SBU) Singapore media featured prominently China's decision to parole the Singapore Straits Times' chief China correspondent Ching Cheong February 5 (reftel). Coverage included photos of Ching's joyful reunion with his family in Hong Kong after China's surprise decision to release him just before Chinese New Year. Ching was arrested in China in 2005 and later convicted of allegedly selling state secrets to Taiwan. His family had made several requests for his release because of Ching's various medical conditions. The Straits Times extensively covered Ching's release in its February 6 edition, with seven different articles about his ordeal and release. The articles emphasized the efforts of various individuals and organizations to secure Ching's release, while noting that the Straits Times had provided legal and financial support for Ching and his family during his detention.

12. (C) Comment: While the GOS and government-controlled Singapore Press Holdings (The Straits Times' parent organization) likely lobbied China on Ching's behalf throughout his detention, they did not play up these efforts in public. Rather, they took a consistently low-key approach, apparently calculating that publicly confronting China over Ching's arrest and conviction might be counterproductive. End Comment.

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